UNITED NATIONS **S**

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S/1996/371
23 May 1996
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 23 MAY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

As representative of the State presiding over the statutory bodies of the Commonwealth of Independent States, I have the honour to transmit to you the decision on the presence of collective peace-keeping forces in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia (annex I), and the declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, both adopted at a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Moscow on 17 May 1996 (annex II).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

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Annex I

Decision on the presence of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia

The Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Desiring to continue the efforts to settle the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia,

Reaffirming its previous decisions aimed at achieving this objective,

Has decided:

1. To add, with the consent of the parties, the following provision to the mandate of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in Abkhazia, Georgia:

- Demarcation of minefields and mine clearance in the territory of Abkhazia, Georgia, with the assistance of the United Nations and in cooperation with the local authorities.

2. To instruct the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth and the Council of Ministers of Defence of the States members of the Commonwealth to pursue their efforts, together with the representatives of the parties, to amplify the mandate of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in accordance with the decision of 19 January 1996 of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth, entitled "Extension of the presence and the mandate of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia".

3. To extend the presence of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in Abkhazia, Georgia, until 19 July 1996.

4. To instruct the parties to the conflict, with the assistance of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia, to take additional measures to ensure the safety of the personnel of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia in the performance of their duties.

5. To call upon the parties to the conflict to accelerate the negotiations process with a view to ensuring a political settlement with the Russian Federation acting as facilitator.

Done in Moscow on 17 May 1996 in one authentic copy in the Russian language. The authentic copy is deposited with the Executive Secretariat of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which shall send a certified copy of this decision to every State that has signed it.

For the Republic of Armenia:

L. TER-PETROSSIAN

For the Republic of Moldova:

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For the Azerbaijani Republic:

H. ALIYEV

For the Republic of Belarus:

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For Georgia:

E. SHEVARDNADZE

For the Republic of Kazakstan:

N. NAZARBAEV

For the Kyrgyz Republic:

A. AKAYEV

For the Russian Federation:

B. YELTSIN

For the Republic of Tajikistan:

E. RAKHMONOV

For Turkmenistan:

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For the Republic of Uzbekistan:

I. KARIMOV

For Ukraine:

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Annex II

Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict

The Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States approves the energetic efforts being made by Russian diplomacy, on the instructions of the President of the Russian Federation, B. N. Yeltsin, to settle the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

The Council expresses its satisfaction at the confirmation by the top leaders of the parties that they are resolved to maintain the cease-fire achieved two years ago, on 12 May 1994, with the Russian Federation acting as facilitator and with the cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Minsk Conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, until a political agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict is concluded. The Council considers it extremely important to resolve all the disputed issues exclusively by peaceful means.

A major humanitarian and political development was the release and repatriation by the parties to the conflict of all 110 prisoners of war and hostages included in the lists of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which took place during the visit by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to the Transcaucasus.

The Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States calls upon the parties, on the basis of the good will demonstrated by them, to intensify their efforts to find compromise solutions at the negotiations on a political settlement.

In the course of a peaceful settlement, the parties need to work actively for the restoration of an atmosphere of peace, mutual understanding and harmony, to take steps to prevent and halt acts of passive and active sabotage and of terrorism in the region, and to implement measures for the strengthening of trust and unilateral gestures of good will.

Moscow, 17 May 1996

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LETTER DATED 22 MAY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On behalf of the European Union I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a declaration of the Presidency of the European Union on Ukraine, issued on Tuesday, 21 May 1996.

I would be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) F. Paolo FULCI
Ambassador

96-13006 (E) 240596 250596

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Ukraine

As the fifth anniversary of the declaration of independence draws near and in the spirit of the common position of 27 November 1994, the European Union reaffirms the fundamental importance of Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty as key elements of security in Europe in the wake of Ukraine's accession to the Council of Europe, testifying to the meaningful progress Ukraine has made in consolidating its democracy. The EU further expresses its appreciation for the active and constructive role played by Ukraine in favour of regional and European stability, and is confident of early approval of the new Constitution, whose entry into force will further legitimize Ukraine's aspiration to integrate fully into the family of European nations.

The European Union supports equally the efforts of the Ukrainian people and its leadership aimed at establishing a market economy, as a prerequisite for economic and social development corresponding to Ukraine's huge human and natural potential. The European Union will continue to use the available instruments to encourage and assist further consolidation of the achievements in the field of economic stabilization and of liberalization. The European Union will also assist the process of integration of Ukraine into the world economic order, through support for its efforts to meet the requirements for membership in the World Trade Organization, and will further examine the possibility of recognizing Ukraine's status as an economy in transition.

More particularly, the European Union considers that implementation of the Interim Agreement and subsequently the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will be a priority for its relations with Ukraine in the coming years. This requires from Ukraine a far-reaching effort to adapt its legislative framework in various domains, economic as well as administrative, an effort which the EU is prepared fully to support. Clear measures of liberalization and privatization as well as stable, non-discriminatory legislation will represent the requisites for a satisfactory level of foreign investment.

The European Union expresses its utmost satisfaction and appreciation at the great progress made by Ukraine in the field of arms control and non-proliferation. We are particularly satisfied with the positive implementation by Kiev of the Lisbon Protocol and associated documents, which has allowed the START I Treaty to enter into force. The Union also welcomes the process of deactivation of strategic forces, the removal and transfer of warheads and destruction of carriers. The Union welcomes Ukraine's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon member State, which strengthened the Treaty on the eve of its Review and Extension Conference. We appreciate as well the positive attitude of Ukraine vis-à-vis the indefinite extension of the Treaty, which will enhance the non-proliferation regime.

As far as nuclear safety is concerned, the Union attaches the greatest importance, as was also stated in the declaration by the Group of Seven Industrialized Countries and the Russian Federation at the Nuclear Safety Summit in Moscow, to the implementation of President Kuchma's decision to close down the Chernobyl nuclear power station definitively by the year 2000. For its part, the EU is, with the Group of Seven, committed to assisting with the implementation of this decision in accordance with the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding signed at Ottawa last December.

The Union regards with deep interest the ongoing intensification of Ukraine's dialogue with the Western European Union, as a significant step in the process of bringing Ukraine closer to European security structures.

In the interests of European stability, the European Union will encourage and facilitate the establishment of good relations between Ukraine and its neighbours. In the same perspective, it is in favour of the renewal of the mandate of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mission in Ukraine.

The meeting of Foreign Minister Udovenko with the Ministerial Troika of the European Union, held on 21 May in Rome, confirmed the excellent state of their relations and endorsed their further evolution in all fields, in parallel with future processes of European Union enlargement, and in full compliance with the terms of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1046 (1996)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1046 (1996) of 13 February 1996, by which the Council authorized an increase in the strength of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) by 50 military personnel in order to provide for a continued engineering capability in support of its operations; approved the establishment of the position of Force Commander of UNPREDEP; and requested the Secretary-General to submit to it not later than 20 May 1996 further recommendations on the composition, strength and mandate of UNPREDEP, in the light of developments in the region.

2. It will be recalled that the Security Council, in its resolution 1027 (1995) of 30 November 1995, decided to extend the mandate of UNPREDEP for a period ending on 30 May 1996, and requested the Secretary-General to keep it regularly informed of any developments on the ground and other circumstances affecting that mandate and to submit, by 31 January 1996, for review by the Council, a report on all aspects of UNPREDEP in the light of developments in the region. On the basis of my report of 30 January (S/1996/65) and my letter dated 6 February 1996 to the President of the Council (S/1996/94) and the annex thereto, the Council adopted resolution 1046 (1996). Since the present report makes recommendations on the composition, strength and mandate of UNPREDEP, it should be read in conjunction with my previous reports, notably those of 23 November 1995 (S/1995/987) and 30 January 1996 (S/1996/65).

II. COMPOSITION, STRENGTH AND MANDATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS PREVENTIVE DEPLOYMENT FORCE

3. In the letter dated 1 February 1996 from the President of the Security Council (S/1996/76), the Council concurred in principle with my recommendation that UNPREDEP become an independent mission without change in its mandate, strength or composition of forces.

4. Consequently, I have redesignated the Chief of Mission, UNPREDEP, Mr. Henryk J. Sokalski, as my Special Representative for the former Yugoslav

Republic of Macedonia and appointed Brigadier-General Bo Wranker (Sweden) as the Force Commander of UNPREDEP. They continue to ensure the effective day-to-day functioning of the operation and report directly to United Nations Headquarters.

5. The military component of UNPREDEP consists of two mechanized infantry battalions - a Nordic composite battalion and a United States Army task force - supported by a heavy engineering platoon from Indonesia. The total authorized strength of the military component is 1,050 troops and 35 United Nations military observers. The number of civilian police monitors is 26. The authorized strength of the civilian component is 168. The international civilian and military personnel have come from 40 countries.

6. The mandate of UNPREDEP to contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has required it to concern itself with numerous aspects of the country's internal and external situation. Its tasks include preventive deployment, good offices, measures to build confidence, early warning, fact-finding, monitoring and reporting, as well as selected social and developmental projects, taking into account the statement by the President of the Security Council of 22 February 1995 (S/PRST/1995/9).

7. In pursuance of its mandate, and that of the good offices of my Special Representative, components of UNPREDEP with responsibility for political and humanitarian matters have maintained an active dialogue with all political forces and ethnic groups in the country in order to promote internal peace and stability. As a result, UNPREDEP has been recognized as a significant instrument for facilitating dialogue, restraint and practical compromise between different segments of society.

8. The presence and high visibility of United Nations troops patrolling the northern and western borders of the country continue to have a calming and stabilizing effect throughout the area. The UNPREDEP presence has also had a deterrent effect on cross-border smuggling and has thus reduced incidents of violence between smugglers, illegal immigrants and the border patrols of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

9. In parallel with its primary task of monitoring and reporting on the situation along the borders with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Albania, UNPREDEP maintains liaison with the host country's Ministry of Defence and relations with the General Staff of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and is in contact with the relevant ministries in Albania. The battalion commanders have also established direct channels of communication with their border battalion counterparts in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Albania. In those contacts, the United Nations patrol line along the northern border of the host country has been clearly defined, thereby reducing the risk of incidents, in particular in the monitored border areas. The military component also interfaces with a number of civilian agencies and, capacity permitting, offers various community services as well as humanitarian assistance to the local population in the areas of deployment. Whenever they can do so without jeopardizing their main tasks, the national contingents also provide assistance for the construction and repair of roads, telecommunication facilities and water-distribution systems.

10. Complementing the work of the formed units, United Nations military observers monitor some 5,000 square kilometres of territory and assess the military situation within it. Their community visits and meetings with municipal leaders have contributed to a better understanding of problems facing the local residents. The United Nations civilian police monitor the work of the local police, in particular in areas with high concentrations of minority groups. Their visits to villages help build confidence among the local population.

11. Since the termination of the activities of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, UNPREDEP has continued to undertake tasks in areas where it once cooperated with the Conference and its various working groups. In that context, UNPREDEP addresses humanitarian issues and the promotion of dialogue on questions of human rights involving ethnic communities and national minorities. It has also initiated a series of projects that address the needs of the local population in the areas of development and social integration. Such projects are aimed primarily at national capacity-building and strengthening the governmental infrastructure. They involve several United Nations organizations and agencies, and local and international non-governmental organizations.

III. ACTIVITIES OF OTHER UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS, AGENCIES AND PROGRAMMES

12. The thrust of the programmes of the United Nations organizations and agencies represented in Skopje has been to support the Government and its institutions as stability is established in the country. Resource constraints have so far not permitted the establishment of a resident representation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

United Nations Children's Fund

13. UNICEF began its activities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in late 1992 in response to the influx of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The implementation of a three-year country programme in health and nutrition, education and social welfare is progressing. Close cooperation with local authorities and institutions has produced positive results in identifying the causes of environmental health problems, developing modern approaches to learning and providing basic educational equipment. Special attention has been given to the needs of refugee children.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

14. UNHCR established its office in Skopje in July 1992, when the first group of refugees arrived in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Assistance to an estimated 40,000 refugees was provided under a special care and maintenance project. Currently, the number of refugees assisted by UNHCR is 6,300, of whom 1,200 are accommodated in collective centres and 5,100 with host families. The UNHCR programme will now concentrate on assisting repatriation.

World Health Organization

15. WHO has recently opened a liaison office in Skopje. An agreement on cooperation between the Organization and the Government will be signed at the end of May 1996. WHO has concentrated on several priority areas, including health care policy, reform and financing of the health care system, family planning, infant mortality and disease prevention. An effective programme of immunization is under way. Emphasis is also being placed on health education, training and drug abuse control.

World Bank and the International Development Association

16. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a member of the World Bank and IDA. Since the end of 1993, investments have been made to support the upgrading of the transportation network and the modernization of customs administration. The country has also turned to the World Bank for investment and advisory services to foster economic growth. Beginning in March 1996, the expanding portfolio of projects funded by the World Bank has been serviced and coordinated by the Bank's resident mission in Skopje.

International Monetary Fund

17. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's membership of IMF has been based on two formal financial arrangements. Drawings under the programme within the systematic transmission facility have amounted to special drawing rights (SDR) 24 million. The Government's request for a 13-month standby arrangement of SDR 22.3 million has been approved and largely disbursed. Negotiations for an extended structural adjustment facility will start soon. The Fund has also provided technical assistance in monetary policy implementation, bank supervision, customs modernization, introduction of a treasury system, national accounts and other areas of statistical and fiscal management. IMF is assisting the Government in achieving the desired targets through privatization, enterprise restructuring and banking reforms.

IV. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

18. Notwithstanding the different political and military circumstances that in the past three years have contributed to the current conditions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, peace and stability within its borders are still dependent in large part on developments in the rest of the former Yugoslavia. The degree of success that can be achieved in implementing the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see A/50/790-S/1995/999) will determine to a great extent whether lasting peace and stability can take hold in the region as a whole.

19. The foreign policy of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is based on the principle of "equidistance", which implies good relations with all four neighbouring countries. The most significant development in the past four months has been the signing on 8 April 1996 of the Agreement on the Regulation of Relations and the Promotion of Cooperation between the Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This has been an important step towards

the unconditional mutual recognition of all States in the region. It is expected that the two neighbours will now move expeditiously to demarcate their mutual border. UNPREDEP stands ready to lend its logistical and technical assistance, if so requested.

20. Considerable progress has been achieved in improving relations with Greece, on the basis of the Interim Accord of 13 September 1995 (S/1995/794, annex 1). My Special Envoy, Mr. Cyrus Vance, continues to play an active part in efforts to resolve the outstanding differences between the two Governments, pursuant to Security Council resolution 817 (1993) of 7 April 1993 and Article 5 of the Interim Accord. The parties held talks under the auspices of Mr. Vance in February and April and have agreed to another round of talks in June 1996. Two other important initiatives have been further advanced by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia at the international level, namely, the development of good-neighbourly relations among the Balkan States (see General Assembly resolution 50/80 B) and the preparation of a comparative study of the minority situation in the various Balkan countries, to be conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.

21. A noteworthy internal development has been the emergence of a parliamentary opposition. As a result of a reshuffle in February 1996, the Liberal Party, which had been an important member of the ruling coalition, left the Government to become the principal opposition party. The dispute between the ruling and opposition parties over the constitutional basis for the government reshuffle did not degenerate into a major political crisis and this illustrates the improvement in political stability.

22. Following the establishment of the new Government, the two major non-parliamentary opposition parties launched a nationwide campaign to collect signatures in support of a referendum on early parliamentary elections, in accordance with the pertinent provisions of the Constitution. While the parliamentary majority was not prepared to recognize the constitutional basis for this initiative, the peaceful and organized manner in which it was carried out was another encouraging example of progress in consolidating pluralist democracy.

23. Although the new Government includes five ministers and a number of other senior officials of ethnic Albanian origin, inter-ethnic tensions remain a threat to the country's social fabric, its integration and its long-term stability. At the current pace, the Government's declared policy of affirmative action and "positive discrimination" in favour of underrepresented ethnic groups appears likely to produce the results at a much slower pace than expected.

24. Internal political, ethnic and social tensions are exacerbated by the fragile state of the economy. Much of the expected international assistance - which would be provided in accordance with the provisions of Article 50 of the Charter - has not been forthcoming and the process of economic restructuring and reform continues to be painful. Although increased privatization has contributed to a 5.3 per cent rise in industrial production in the first quarter of 1996 over that of the previous year, the first such rise in many years, unemployment remains high and is a source of concern.

V. ASSESSMENT OF THE COMPOSITION, STRENGTH AND MANDATE OF UNPREDEP

25. In response to the request made by the Security Council in paragraph 3 of its resolution 1046 (1996) for recommendations on the composition, strength and mandate of UNPREDEP in the light of developments in the region, I asked UNPREDEP to evaluate alternative options to the deployment of troops, including their replacement by a group of United Nations military observers. I also asked that the functions of the civilian component be reviewed. The paragraphs below summarize the results of the UNPREDEP evaluation.

A. Military component

26. UNPREDEP has, until now, successfully implemented its mandate by stationing the right mix of soldiers in the right locations and by patrolling areas within its theatre with maximum vigilance and efficiency. The alternative of entrusting these tasks exclusively to United Nations military observers has to be judged on the basis of whether it would be capable of maintaining the current high level of surveillance of the borders. My military advisers estimate that a minimum of 250 observers would be required to replace the two infantry battalions and that even this number would be a poor substitute for the accurate reporting system now provided by the two infantry battalions.

27. An operation involving only military observers would require a choice between two options concerning their location. Under the first option the military observers would live within daily driving distance of the border areas. Even assuming increased helicopter support and good weather conditions, the efficiency of the observers would be only 25 to 30 per cent of that of the infantry units that currently live at the observation posts. However, inclement weather prevails during eight months of the year, which means that observation posts are accessible only with tracked vehicles and helicopters. During the winter, many posts cannot be reached at all because of snow, ice and/or fog. Soldiers endure these conditions and continue their patrolling activities, except when their safety is at risk. United Nations military observers, on the other hand, would have to allow for the time needed to travel between their accommodations and the observation posts, as well as coping with the severe weather conditions at the border. As a result, patrolling by military observers would be extremely taxing and would be restricted to a few daylight hours per day for most of the year.

28. The demands of border patrolling would oblige the military observers to reduce significantly their community patrols and meetings with the local civil and military authorities. To maintain those activities, which complement information-gathering from the observation posts, additional observers would be required above the estimated 250. While this option would be less expensive in terms of accommodation, it would thus entail significant operational disadvantages.

29. The second option would be for military observers to man some, but not all, of the observation posts and to live on site, as the infantry do at present. This would maximize patrol time, as daily travel to and from the observation

posts would not be required. However, fewer posts would be manned than at present and only a smaller area could be monitored. At present, the minimum strength of observation posts is seven or eight soldiers. If they were to be replaced by smaller numbers of military observers, it would be imperative to maintain or establish a robust multifunctional element to support them in supply management, facility and vehicle maintenance, and administration. Again, supplying and rotating military observers at the observation posts would require tracked vehicles and helicopters during eight months of the year.

30. Both options require the same type of vehicles as are used today, that is, four-wheel-drive tracked vehicles and armoured personnel carriers. Helicopter support would be essential, though in greater quantity for the first option than for the second. Engineering requirements would be less for the first option, since maintenance of observation posts would not be necessary, but roads would still need to be maintained and upgraded continuously.

31. While it is therefore technically and operationally feasible to replace the current formed units with United Nations military observers, there would be severe disadvantage with regard to the UNPREDEP core function of monitoring the border and only modest savings. It must also be borne in mind that agreement on the demarcation of the border between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has yet to be reached and that the Government and people of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have expressed concern about the potential threats arising from regional instability and the country's inadequate defensive capabilities.

B. Civilian component

32. The civilian component of UNPREDEP is small in comparison with that of similar operations, notwithstanding the growing importance of its good offices mandate and its efforts to promote institution-building and reconciliation among conflict-prone communities. As there is neither a United Nations resident coordinator nor a humanitarian coordinator in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General is alone responsible for the coordination of all the United Nations activities, as well as cooperation with other international organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Together with the Force Commander, he ensures the day-to-day functioning of the mission and maintains contact with the highest authorities of the host country and, whenever necessary, some of the neighbouring countries, in order to foster a climate of mutual cooperation.

33. In spite of serious resource constraints, the small public information unit has worked vigorously to inform the local media about the role of the United Nations in general and UNPREDEP in particular. Information personnel also analyse the media to assess and monitor political, economic and social developments.

34. The team of 26 civilian police daily monitors the border areas, which are largely populated by ethnic minorities, emphasizing the rule of law and respect for human rights, and maintains liaison with local police authorities,

especially in politically or ethnically sensitive cases. Their role has been especially positive in cases of illegal border crossings and related fatal shootings of Albanian nationals by border personnel.

35. The UNPREDEP administration provides civilian logistics, transportation, communications and engineering support to the entire mission. It also coordinates financial, procurement and personnel matters at the local level. In the past few months, it has faced the difficult task of maintaining its ongoing programmes, while at the same time restructuring for a "stand-alone" operation.

36. In view of the above, I have concluded that the strength and composition of the civilian component is, at the present point, appropriate for the tasks at hand. However, many of the activities currently performed by the UNPREDEP civilian component would, in the longer term, be more effectively undertaken by UNDP and other United Nations organizations and specialized agencies.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

37. UNPREDEP is the first preventive force deployed by the United Nations. It has played an important role in helping the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to establish its statehood and to consolidate its security. The country has had to undertake this political and economic transition in difficult circumstances. Continuing turbulence in the region has tended to accentuate the stresses and strains that exist within the country's own body politic. Differences with some of its neighbours have been a further complicating factor, especially as regards the country's economic rehabilitation, which has also been impeded by the sanctions regime until recently in force against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In this testing situation the mere presence of a United Nations force has undoubtedly had a reassuring, stabilizing and confidence-building effect. In addition, the Force's military operations have helped to reduce tensions on the country's borders and to ensure that stability there is impaired neither by unintended military confrontations nor by the activities of armed smugglers. I thus share the general view that UNPREDEP has been, and continues to be, a success for the United Nations, for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and for the region as a whole.

38. However, like all peace-keeping operations at this time of financial crisis, UNPREDEP must be rigorously examined to see whether its mandate is still required and, if so, whether that mandate can be executed with fewer resources.

39. Whether its mandate is still required gives rise to the question posed in paragraph 25 of my report of 30 January 1996 (S/1996/65): how does one measure the success of a preventive operation and judge that if it is reduced or withdrawn peace and stability will continue to hold, threats and tensions that have so far been contained will disappear and channels or institutions for defusing them will continue to be built or consolidated?

40. The view of the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is that there is a continued need for UNPREDEP in order to maintain stability, preserve the gains already achieved and avoid undermining the still fragile

structures of peace in the Balkans. That view is shared by the leaderships of other political parties and of various ethnic groups in the country. It is also shared by most, though not all, of the Governments that have expressed views to the Secretariat in recent weeks, including the Governments of the troop-contributing nations.

41. The Government, in a letter addressed to me on 8 April 1996, advanced the following arguments in support of its request for the extension of the mandate of UNPREDEP for another 12 months:

(a) The sensitive phase of implementation of the Dayton Agreement, which is, in any case, exposed to risks and complications;

(b) The potential regional threats, especially Kosovo in the immediate proximity of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the non-demarcation of the border line with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

(c) Inadequate defensive capabilities while the country's efforts to join collective security arrangements remain ongoing;

(d) The positive role of UNPREDEP in the process of establishing democratic structures and policies of good neighbourliness.

42. While it is impossible to be sure what would be the effects of withdrawing UNPREDEP at this time, I see much force in the arguments advanced by the Government and by others who wish the operation to remain. The threats to the stability of the country are certainly much less than they were when I recommended a preventive deployment in November 1992. However, it is too soon to be confident that stability has been established in the region. Full implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina is far from being assured; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, where much of the UNPREDEP patrolling takes place, has yet to be demarcated; the dispute between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece has not yet been completely resolved; and internal tensions of an inter-ethnic nature persist. It is to be hoped that all these potential threats to the country's stability and security will diminish during the coming months. But for the moment I believe that it would be imprudent to withdraw UNPREDEP.

43. There remains the important question of whether the mandate of UNPREDEP could be implemented with fewer resources. I am convinced by the arguments in part V of the present report against replacing the UNPREDEP infantry with military observers. Its patrolling tasks are undoubtedly ones for formed units of infantry. The issue at stake is whether the current volume of patrolling and the current number of observation posts are absolutely necessary. The Security Council will recall that the original recommendation, in my report of 9 December 1992 (S/24923), was for an infantry component of only one battalion, with an approximate strength of 700 all ranks. The Council subsequently decided to add a second battalion and this enabled the Force to increase the scope of its patrolling and observation. It is to be hoped that further changes for the better in the country and its region during the coming months may soon make it possible to revert to the infantry strength originally recommended.

44. It is my intention to review the above questions relating to the concept and strength of UNPREDEP at regular intervals and to inform the Security Council as soon as I judge that developments in the region and/or in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia itself permit further economies. Meanwhile, I recommend that the mandate of the Force, in its present configuration, should be extended for a further period of six months, to 30 November 1996.

45. Finally, I wish to reiterate my gratitude to the troop-contributing countries for their contribution to the success of UNPREDEP. I should like also to pay tribute to my Special Representative, Mr. Sokalski, and to the dedicated civilian and military personnel of UNPREDEP, for their performance, commitment and selfless service to the international community.

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1046 (1996)

Addendum

In my report on the financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force currently before the General Assembly (A/50/895), the cost of maintaining the Force in its present composition for a 12-month period is estimated at $52.4 million. Therefore, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of the Force for a further six-month period as I have recommended, the cost for the extension period would be $26.2 million.

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